

Over-the-Counter Drugs

Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are drugs you can buy without a prescription.

It is very important to read the label when using OTC drugs. It is the only way to know how to use the drug the right way.

FDA passed a law about labels on OTC drugs. The law says that all OTC products must have a new label called "Drug Facts." This label will show people the best, safest way to use OTC drugs.

How is the new label different?

- It will use common words that are easy to understand.
- The print will be bigger, making it easier to read.
- The label will look the same, and be in the same place, on every product.

What will be on the label?

- Active ingredients—what is in the product that makes it work
- Purposes—what the drug is for
- Uses—what problems it is used to treat
- Warnings—who should not take the product, problems to watch out for
- Directions—how much to take, when to take it
- Inactive Ingredients—what else is in the product. People can see if they are allergic to something in the product.

How will the new label help me?

- It will help you compare products and choose the best one for your illness.
- The product will work its best because you can use it the right way.
- You will have all the information you need to stay away from problems.

To Learn More...

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
<http://www.fda.gov/cder/otc/label/quesanswers.htm>
or 1-888-463-6332 (1-888-INFO-FDA)

FDA/Office of Women's Health
www.fda.gov/womens